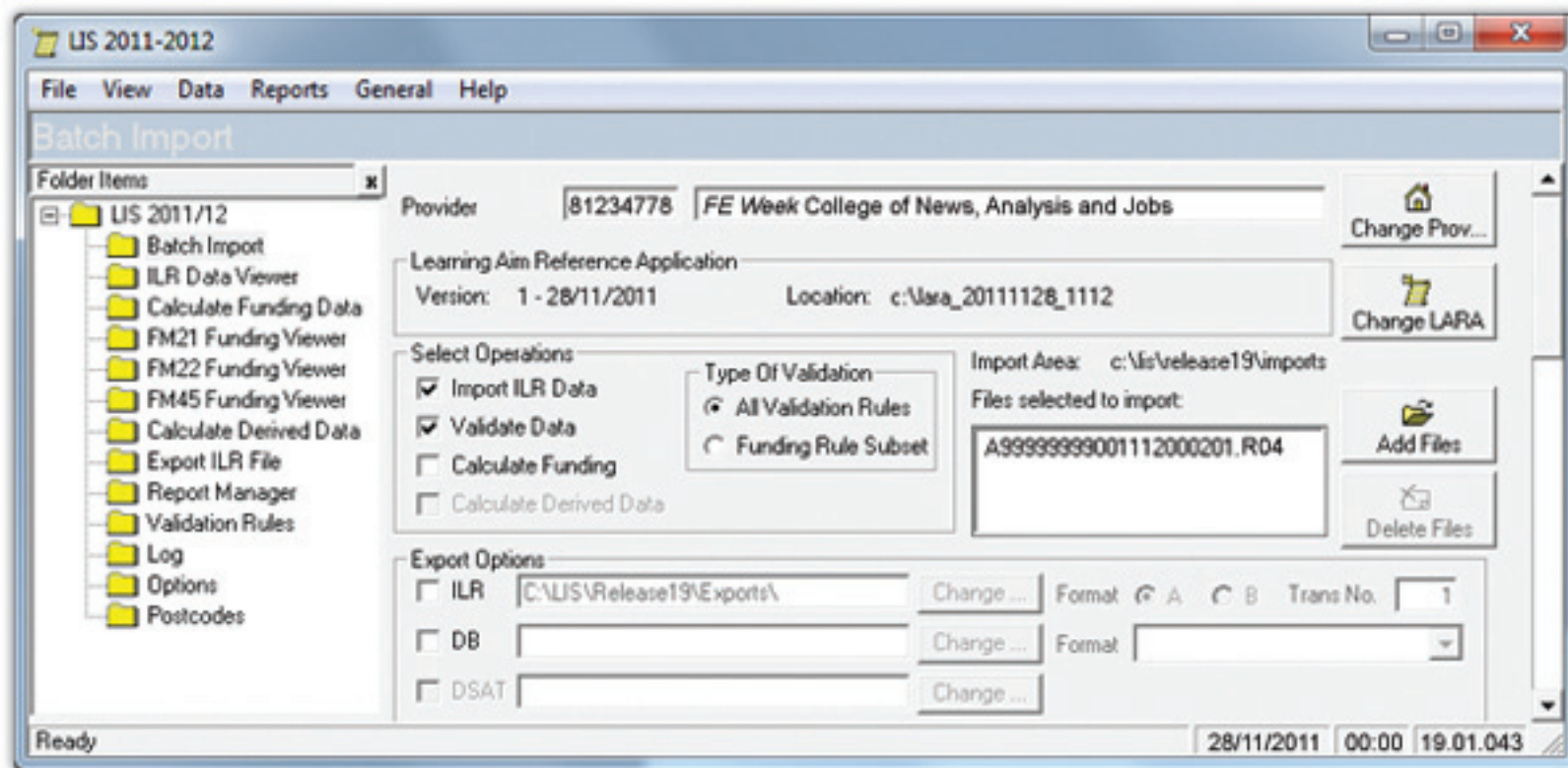


Anxiety over government funding tools



FE Week Exclusive

Nick Summers

@SummersNicholas

Government further education (FE) funding software is “not functional” and there are “serious problems across all government agencies related to data”, according to the College Management Information Systems (CMIS) network.

A letter seen by *FE Week* and supported by more than a hundred FE colleges says the Learner Information Suite (LIS), is the source of some of the sector’s most serious systems-based problems.

“The LIS is still not functional,” the letter states.

“An update was released on Friday (November 18, 2011), which was rapidly withdrawn as it was still not functioning correctly.”

LIS is free government software designed to be used by all providers to calculate funding and validate data, known as the Individualised Learner Record (ILR).

Colleges and other providers then return the ILR online to the Data Service, an organisation funded by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills and supported by the Skills Funding Agency (SFA),

to act as a single, central point of information for FE.

“We are unable to accurately say how much funding from our contract we have used to date, which means that it is very difficult for us to manage what provision we should be offering for the rest of the year,” the letter states.

Providers are expected to use the LIS to submit the next critical data return, known as R04 ILR, by December 6.

The latest Data Service newsletter, published on November 24, states: “Recent discussions on feconnect, JISCmail and email have highlighted that some providers are concerned about the upcoming 2011/12 R04 ILR deadline due to issues with supporting systems, such as the LIS and the Provider Data Self-Assessment Toolkit, which allow them to check their data quality before sending it in.

“The funding agencies understand that providers are concerned about the impact this may have on funding allocations, reconciliations and performance management, particularly given the current tough financial environment, but are assured that any legitimate provider concerns can be raised with the appropriate funding agency directly.

“For the R04 return, providers

are required to send data for ALL of their learners so that the YPLA, the SFA and National Apprenticeship Service are able to gauge the numbers of learners and learning aims within the system.

“The Data Service would like to apologise for any inconvenience caused to providers having issues with the LIS and the Online Data Collection system.”

However, a spokesperson for the SFA told *FE Week*: “As mentioned in Update 84, ‘Providers are advised that the current LIS V19.01 Maintenance Release 2 is adequate for the R04 ILR return due on December 6, 2011.’”

The Data Service has also published an 11-page document identifying a number of known issues associated with the current version of LIS.

Problems identified in the report include the amalgamation performance of LIS becoming slow, as well as the software becoming unresponsive during a Batch Import process.

Providers have been advised by the Data Service to submit their R04 ILR return early “to ensure that it is validated and processed in time.”

In response, the letter from members of the CMIS network states: “This means that the ‘deadlines’ provided by the Information Author-

ity now have to be exceeded in order to guarantee that quarterly reconciliation and lagged learner model are using accurate numbers.

“It would be grossly unfair for a provider to be penalised for the shortcomings of a central system.

“Surely meeting a submission deadline fulfils our part of the contract?”

The letter also suggests that many providers have had incorrect provider factors submitted to the LIS in the past, resulting in the calculation of incorrect funding.

The letter states: “We feel that the Data Service has performed unacceptably of late in providing the sector with the tools it needs to meet central requirements.

“There is no apparent accountability here.”

The letter was discussed in a recent meeting by the Association of Colleges (AoC) and Martin Doel, its chief executive, will be writing independently to Geoff Russell, SFA chief executive.

Matt Dean, Technology Manager at the AoC, said: “AoC recognises that problems with the delivery of software tools by the SFA have been ongoing for some time, but they are acute this year and this has led to a great deal of anxiety and uncertainty for colleges.”

Monday 28 November 2011

www.feweek.co.uk

Prof. Daniel Khan



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AELP calls for clarity on taxpayer spending

Nick Reinis
@fenickr

Greater clarity is needed to ensure taxpayers know where their money is being spent, a further education (FE) body has warned as a new pilot is launched.

The Association of Employment and Learning Providers (AELP) say that government contribution to employer funded training should be clearly specified and should not subsidise training investment companies "have always made".

It follows Prime Minister David Cameron's announcement of a new £250 million pilot fund for businesses to design, develop and buy vocational training.

An initial fund of £50m is available in 2012/13 for employers to bid, but if it is a success then a further £200m will be available the following year.

However, the specification has yet to be written and the AELP will be making suggestions about how it should be framed.

Graham Hoyle, the AELP chief executive, said: "I have absolutely no problems with the concept of 'employer ownership' and have indeed argued that the pendulum has swung far too far in the direction of government interference.

"It will be very important, however, for the government to be perhaps clearer than it has ever been about what it, on behalf of the taxpayer, is paying for."

He added: "What the government should never be paying for is development of specific vocational skills required by employers to run their own, profitable, businesses.

"These skills have always been funded by

employers, who have recognised the bottom line return that such investments invariably bring."

At the Association of Colleges (AoC) Annual Conference last week, Business Secretary Vince Cable described the pilot as a "radical" approach.

He added: "The introduction of a pilot using employers as purchasers might sound threatening to some providers, and perhaps to some of you, it actually represents an opportunity for the best to expand.

"We aim to build on, not undermine, the strong relationships many of you already have with employers. Our approach will be flexible, rather than bureaucratic - enabling you to work more closely with business."

AoC chief executive Martin Doel, although admitting that not enough detail was available yet, questioned the plan.

Mr Doel asked: "What accountabilities will they accept for receiving or having direct control of skills funding?"

"And how will they demonstrate that they are delivering public value, just as colleges deliver public value?"

During a press conference, Mr Cable responded to Mr Doel's questions.

Mr Cable said: "The UKCES, which is the umbrella organisation that actually installs the sector skills councils and operates the levy schemes and so on, that is the main vehicle through which the employers channel their concerns.

"But accountability and the use of public money will be done in the normal way. The Skills Funding Agency is the key agency in government, which will be held to account for the money they spend, just as colleges are when they're directly funded."

Gazelle colleges to teach FE students entrepreneurship

Nick Summers
@SummersNicholas

College principals and business leaders have launched an initiative to make the further education sector more entrepreneurial.

The Gazelle Group is developing a new curriculum that challenges students to take charge of a college-owned business which operates in their local community.

"We've got to create real companies and real businesses on our campuses in order for students to earn real money and operate in a commercial environment," Fintan Donohue, the principal of North Hertfordshire College told *FE Week* during Association of Colleges (AoC) Annual Conference last week.

"That's quite a big, controversial statement. I'm saying a proportion of the students programme will not be teacher led, it'll actually be exponentially led."

The Gazelle initiative was created by Generator Enterprises Limited, a new company founded by college principals Amarjit Basi, Mariane Cavalli, Mr Donohue (right), Dick Palmer and Richard Thorold.



Students will work on a real-life business relevant to their course and owned by the college, such as a restaurant, hairdressing salon or music production company.

Mr Donohue said: "Our model, if it works over the next five to 10 years, is if you come into an entrepreneurial college a significant proportion of the student output, including what they learn and what they do, will be gained as if they're genuinely working in business."

Participating colleges will give learners real cash to invest, and perhaps lose, in their acquired business. Learners will typically operate the company for six months.

FE Week news in brief Record NEETs

Record numbers of young people are out of education, work and training.

Statistics published by the Department for Education show in the third quarter of 2011 that 1,163,000 of 16 to 24-year-olds - which is almost one in five - are considered NEET.

The data also shows more than one in five 18-24-year-olds, 1,013,000 in total, and around one in seven 16-18-year-olds, 267,000 in total, are also considered NEET. See figures on page 8.

For more see www.feweek.co.uk

New £60m fund

More than £60 million will be invested to drive employer investment in skills.

The Employer Investment Fund, through the UK Commission for Employment and Skills (UKCES), will support 18 Sector Skills Councils with employer skills solutions.

Charlie Mayfield, chair of John Lewis Partnership and UKCES, said the UK had become less competitive globally on skills, adding: "The answer lies in moving away from grant funding to investing in employer led skills solutions, building the capacity and capability for employers to take ownership of the skills agenda."

For more, see www.feweek.co.uk

Level 1 decline

Colleges have seen a 14 per cent drop in Level 1 learners, the Association of Colleges (AoC) has revealed.

Interim data from a sample of 116 colleges also shows a three per cent decline between 2010/11 and 2011/12 in 16-18 learner numbers.

However, recruitment was varied, with over 36 per cent of colleges reporting an increase in enrolment and around 64 per cent a decline.

For more, see www.feweek.co.uk

Principals involved in the Gazelle initiative include, among others, Graham Morley from South Staffordshire College, Maxine Room from Lewisham College, and Stella Mbubaegbu from Highbury College.

Businesses run by the students will have some restrictions in place to ensure they don't lose large amounts of college funding, and by definition public money.

"We put proper legal parameters around it, so although they're operating as if they're owners, there is a safety net, because they're dealing with public money," Mr Donohue said.

The Gazelle Group is working with a number of business entrepreneurs such as Peter Jones CBE and Doug Richard from the BBC television show *Dragons' Den*, and Ben Ramsden, founder of *Pants to Poverty*.

Mr Richard said: "I am a firm believer that entrepreneurship can be taught and must be learned, and that's why I am hugely supportive of this initiative.

"We need a new generation of entrepreneurs who will deliver the young, fast-growth, gazelle businesses that create the new jobs, wealth and innovation, and the further education sector plays a critical part in delivering on this."

Ofsted: Too little outstanding teaching in learning and skills

Nick Reinis

@fenickr

Quality of teaching in further education has been criticised in the annual report education regulator Ofsted.

The report said there was “too little outstanding teaching in learning and skills providers” inspected in 2010/11.

It said only 13 independent learning providers and two employer providers were judged outstanding for quality of teaching, with no colleges, adult and community learning providers making the grade.

The indictment has led to the suggestion that providers should only be graded with an overall outstanding mark if their teaching is outstanding. The plan is being canvassed by the Institute for Learning (IfL), which has received “strong support” for the notion from more than 2,000 members who have replied to a survey on proposed framework changes.

IfL chief executive Toni Fazaeli said: “We agree with Ofsted that excellent teaching and learning

are the keys to success. It is disappointing too little outstanding teaching was seen in colleges, adult and community learning providers and prisons inspected this year.”

Other findings include less than half the colleges inspected being judged to be good or outstanding.

However, this is in the context of a risk-based approach to inspection, where a greater percentage of previously satisfactory or inadequate providers were inspected during the course of 2010/11. The most recent inspections for all colleges showed 70 per cent were graded as good or outstanding.

But Ofsted criticised “slow progress” of colleges previously found to be satisfactory, with 22 no better and two worse out of 40.

Joy Mercer, director of policy (Education) at the Association of Colleges, is pleased at the overall picture.

But she added: “There are concerns about the number of colleges which continue to be identified as satisfactory under Ofsted’s new ‘at risk’ inspection regime and the one per cent which are deemed inadequate.



“Colleges are never complacent about their performance and continually strive to improve their provision.”

Independent learning providers increased in those judged good or outstanding; from 47 per cent in 2009/10 to 55 per cent in 2010/11. Outstanding grades have increased from four per cent last year to ten per cent this year. Ten of the 16 employer providers inspected this year were judged to be outstanding or good, and six were judged as satisfactory.

Although 33 of the 45 adult and community learning providers inspected were judged good, only one was outstanding overall and no providers were judged outstanding for quality of teaching for the second year.

Graham Hoyle, chief executive of the AELP, said: “It is very encouraging. The chief inspector also highlights high success rates in the independent sector, which means that we are delivering value for money for the taxpayer and the economy.”

SFA chief says he is ‘grappling’ with apprenticeship ‘teething problems’

Nick Summers

@summersnicholas

The chief executive of the Skills Funding Agency (SFA) says he is “grappling” with apprenticeship issues after admitting to “teething problems” in the current system.

Geoff Russell, speaking to *FE Week* at the Association of Colleges (AoC) Annual Conference, said the SFA has “spotted” concerns and is trying to better define apprenticeships.

He said: “One of the important elements of an apprenticeship is experience at work. And you know the benefits of that aren’t necessarily as measurable as perhaps one would like, but I think most people recognise there is a value for spending a year or two working with people in a work environment.

“So it’s kind of a definitional thing and it’s arisen because of the huge, successful increase in the number of apprenticeships.

“There’s always going to be some teething problems and this is the emergence of one. I don’t think you’ll be surprised to learn that it’s been spotted and we’re working with colleagues in the National Apprenticeship Service to get a tighter definition of what an apprenticeship is.”

Mr Russell said the SFA would “probably need to tighten the rules” around what is considered to be a reasonable length of an apprenticeship, while admitting some cases were raising questions about the structure of apprenticeship frameworks.

He said: “I think we’ve probably been operating on the assumption that apprenticeships should be one or two years.

“I guess instances like that provoke the question ‘well should we be a bit more proactive in terms of saying what the expectation should be around the average duration of an apprenticeship?’ If someone is an outlier from that expectation, it’s about having a look at it and saying ‘well



is there a good reason for that?’ or maybe we should be saying to people, ‘we think it needs to be a bit longer’.”

Mr Russell (above) said the SFA was “grappling” with issues. He added: “If you are in retail or if you are in health, versus if you broaden into mainstream engineering. These are the kinds of issues we’re grappling with.

“In the meantime, I think I can say pretty conclusively, there are very few people out here that we’re aware of that are just breaking the rules. There are a lot of people following the rules in a way that is to their advantage.

“It’s incumbent on us to possibly look a little more carefully at some of those cases, and we are, but I just think we need to keep it in perspective. Of the hundreds of thousands of apprenticeships which are out there, the vast majority, are doing something which pretty much looks like an apprenticeship.”

Mr Russell was also asked about Elmfield Training, one of the UK’s fastest growing training providers.

The firm has been highlighted recently by *FE Week* and *TES* magazine for its profit margins and use of public money.

He said: “There’s an issue that says, what is a reasonable amount for an organisation to make, in terms of profit delivering training. I don’t know the details, but my guess is Elmfield is delivering in a way which is quite possibly entirely compliant with the rules.”

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FE Week investigates...

The great SFA giveaway

Millions spent on SFA redundancy packages

More than £17 million will be spent on voluntary redundancy packages for hundreds of staff as the Skills Funding Agency (SFA) bids to cut long-term costs.

The agency is offering 430 workers exit packages, with increased payments costing a total of £17.4 million.

They say the move is to reduce its administration budget by nearly a quarter over the next four years.

A spokesperson for the SFA said: "We are satisfied that the payments represent good value for money, given the longer-term savings."

However, the agency is determined the reduction in staff numbers will not affect its day-to-day objectives.

The spokesperson added: "We are confident the reduced staffing numbers and functions will allow us to fulfil our role as the funder and promoter of the further education

sector and, critically, will help us to meet our commitment of reducing our administration budget by 24 per cent over the next four years."

The severance pay of each employee will include the time they spent working in Training and Enterprise Councils (TECs).

The spokesperson said: "The agency sought to secure terms within the guidelines set out by the civil service compensation scheme and to offer an incentive to staff wishing to leave.

"The Cabinet Office approved a proposal to include TEC service when calculating severance to ensure that we could treat all staff equally and on the basis of their total continuous service period."

The spokesperson added the SFA was becoming "more streamlined and efficient" in response to the greater freedoms being given to colleges and training organisations.

Unspent millions quietly offered for 19-24 NEETs

FE Week has learnt that additional funding is being offered to colleges to provide better support to people who are not in employment, education or training (NEET).

It is understood that only colleges that met or exceeded their 2010/11 adult funding allocation have been offered these additional funds, and for some colleges well over a million pounds is on offer.

This additional funding is similar to that also being offered to the Third Sector. SFA Update issue 83 states: "This funding is designed to enable Third Sector training organisations to widen their engagement with NEET individuals aged 19-24 and support their entry to the labour market or progress to an apprenticeship or training."

The allocation increases will be confirmed by the SFA in December.

A spokesperson for the SFA said: "The funding forms part of the existing Adult Skills

Budget that is being redeployed as part of our normal quarterly performance review. The first quarterly review for the 2011/12 academic year is currently underway."

FE Week is led to believe colleges have been already been offered the additional funding, but have not yet received any confirmed amounts.

The spokesperson added: "The first quarter review gives the agency an indication of how the money in the system is being utilised and if there is additional capacity.

"Colleges and providers have had discussions with their relationship managers about their proposed delivery for the 2011/12 and what additional demand they have in the 2011/12 contracting year.

"This is part of our published quarterly performance management process and intended to assist in the efforts to reduce the numbers of people not in education, employment or training."

Ministers re-open £60m fund to boost growth

Money is also being handed out to businesses as part of the second phase of the Growth and Innovation Fund (GIF).

Launched last week by Business Secretary Vince Cable and Skills Minister John Hayes, the fund will see BIS provide £34 million for 2012-13.

There is still £29 million available to bid for, with matched funding from businesses there will be around £60 million available under GIF this year.

Leadership for the Fund rests with the UK Commission for Employment and Skills (UKCES) and the Skills Funding Agency.

Geoff Russell, chief executive of the SFA, said: "We look forward to working with employers and their representative organisations to find innovative and sustainable solutions to tackle skills gaps in their sectors.

"The GIF will secure a greater commitment from employers to invest in the skills they need, so creating jobs and apprenticeships, driving enterprise and increasing their overall productivity in support of the growth agenda."

GIF is now open all year, meaning proposals can be submitted whenever they arise and ready to be considered for investment.

Mr Cable said: "The government understands we need to tackle the skills shortages that are holding companies back.

"Through this fund, we will support employers that take collective action to overcome these barriers, helping to rebalance and grow our economy.

"By putting the employer's voice at the heart of the process, we will reward inventive approaches to training that deliver real help to get business moving."

£250m given to employers for their skills training

The government has announced that £250 million of Skills Funding Agency funding will go directly to employers over roughly two years, and completely bypass colleges and traditional training providers.

The Prime Minister said: "Times are tough, especially for young people who are trying to get their foot in the door and launch their career.

"I am determined to do all we can to give people the very best skills, training and opportunities to succeed, and why despite tough spending decisions we are investing in record numbers of apprenticeships.

Mr Cameron added: "We are seeing an incredible take up of these apprenticeship places.

"I want that to continue, which is why we are taking action to make it easier to take on apprentices, and now we are giving

employers the power to take control of the training so that it best meets the skills they need."

Business Secretary Vince Cable said the government wasn't trying to damage the relationships colleges have with employers.

"The introduction of this pilot might sound threatening to some providers, and perhaps to some of you, it actually represents an opportunity for the best to expand," Mr Cable said during the Association of Colleges (AoC) Annual Conference.

"We therefore intend, as the Prime Minister has announced today, to try out a new and radical approach to promoting business engagement and investment in skills and apprenticeships – one where public money is channelled through employers."

Underperforming colleges to keep all the SFA funding

The SFA have announced that they will waive the clawback from a number of providers who deliver at least 97 per cent of their funding targets.

Issue 81 of the SFA's weekly bulletin states: "A tolerance of three per cent will be applied

to the final out turn for 2010/11, so clawback will be waived for providers who have delivered 97 per cent or more."

The approach is intended to ensure that past and current performance is reflected in future funding allocations.

The proposals are subject to the final data return for 2010/11 due later this month, according to the SFA.

The update adds: "Where a provider has delivered more than 100 per cent of the allocation for 2010/11, the assumption

will be this year that the Agency will fund over-performance, subject to a normal maximum of 10 per cent of the total allocation of £1m, whichever is lower."

The SFA will notify providers who are having their clawback changed next month.

FE Week profile

Daniel Khan ~ his story

Janet Murray

@jan_murray

Chief Executive of the Open College Network London Region talks to FE Week

Daniel Khan had his first lessons in entrepreneurship from his father, who ran a corner shop in Trinidad. Helping out in the shop at weekends and cycling round the neighbourhood delivering groceries, he quickly developed a head for business. “It was a good education because you learned the value of hard work, but you also learned the value of money because margins were so tight. He was flexible with customer service, pricing and going that extra mile,” he says.

These are lessons he has carried through his professional life – particularly the bit about going the extra mile. He has had an impressive portfolio career that has included accountancy, financial management, teaching, college leadership and now a chief executive role at the qualifications awarding body the Open College Network, London Region. At some points in his career, he has had two or three jobs on the go at a time.

As a child, Khan set his sights on studying engineering at university. But as the second of five children, he was reluctant to burden his parents financially and chose to train on-the-job as an accountant instead.

In the early 1970s, he was offered the chance to finish his training in London. But after the “nice weather, beaches and barbecues” he had enjoyed growing up in Trinidad, living in the UK was a culture shock. “It didn’t dislike it, but initially it was different,” he recalls. “It was so vast and impersonal...I found the winter and the grey skies difficult, so I was definitely going back to Trinidad as soon as possible.”

Khan did go back to Trinidad – with his wife, who he had met while studying in London – but returned to the UK in the early 1980s and settled in Kent. After a short spell working for Lyon’s Ice Cream, he landed a financial management role at the University of London and spent the next sixteen years working, amongst others, for the Institute of Education, School of African and Oriental Studies and the Institute of Neurology.

In his spare time, he set up an accountancy practice, did a Masters degree in financial management, a diploma in Theology and had a variety of part-time lecturing roles, including both accountancy and bible studies. In 1986, he became the first “non-white” to be elected as a councillor for Gillingham Borough Council, in Kent, where he served for eight years.

Khan’s strong work ethic and endless energy (he sleeps for just four hours a night)

is characteristic of many immigrants, he says. “I think it’s something that drives many of us,” he says. “When I first moved back to the UK, my parents were back at home, I didn’t have anyone to rely on...I felt I really had to make myself sustainable and financially independent.”

But when he was offered a job as deputy principal at York College in 1996, Khan recognised his limits and sold his accountancy practice to a friend. Three years later, he moved to Grimsby College (now Grimsby Institute of Further and Higher Education) as principal; making history as one of just two black college leaders at the time.

Khan gushes about his achievements at Grimsby, where under his leadership, the college turnover went from £15 million to £60 million and hoovered up other institutions until it had “had grown to stretch from Scarborough to Skegness”. His efforts won him an OBE for which he is justifiably proud.

It was also during his time at Grimsby he picked up the title of ‘Professor,’ a source of puzzlement for some, as has not held a senior academic role at a university. Khan says the professorship was awarded by Yangtze University in China, where he lectured when he visited on college business.

But it came as a surprise to the sector when he left, suddenly, last year. While a confidentiality agreement prevents him from talking about the exact circumstances of his departure (it will all be in his book, he jokes), Khan hints there was a growing gulf between him and some of his colleagues about the future direction of the college.

“I could foresee that my style had taken the college where they were and where they wanted to be – but the general feel was this period of economic growth was over,” he says, clearly choosing his words carefully. “They [colleagues at the college] had to consolidate and maybe even look at if we needed to be involved in all we were involved with.”

“When I first moved back to the UK, my parents were back at home, I didn’t have anyone to rely on...I felt I really had to make myself sustainable and financially independent”

In retrospect, the timing of his departure was “miscalculated,” he says. “We had new governors on board and different people bringing different views and I thought maybe the time was coming to leave...but what I probably should have done was leave in six months, but at that time, I had some friends who were starting up a catering business. Because I had said I wanted to leave they said ‘maybe it would be better to leave sooner rather than later; when do you want to leave?’ I said if we could cut a deal, I’d leave straight away.”



Picture by Nick Linford

He left soon afterwards with £100,000 in his pocket. But because Khan had always dealt with journalists direct, there was no one to deal with the media. As a result, it was “not handled well,” he says, which led to speculation in local and trade press about the reasons for his sudden departure.

When the catering venture didn’t work out, Khan moved into consultancy” but a few months after leaving Grimsby, found he was missing working for an organisation and having a direct influence on peoples’ lives. So when a job came up as chief executive of the Open College Network, London Region, he jumped at the chance.

He has taken up the post at an interesting time; the Open College Network, London Region, along with nine other regional networks has recently been given independent awarding status which will give them the freedom to develop qualifications that meet the specific needs of their region alongside the Open College Network qualifications they already deliver. There is a possibility that some may choose to go it alone - and solely deliver their own qualifications - but decisions won’t be finalised until next month.

The increase in university tuition fees, due to rise to £9,000 a year, will mean big changes right across the education sector and Khan predicts a much bigger demand for a “part-time learning, part-time working” model. Universities and colleges will be under far greater pressure to prove they are providing value-for-money – and that their courses help students get jobs, he says.

As well as looking at developing advanced apprenticeship programmes, The Open College Network, London Region, is exploring the idea of partnerships with universities that would allow students to do their first year of a degree at a college, at a reduced cost.

But while there are many advantages to a more competitive education market, quality does need to be monitored carefully, says Khan. “It’s like the American health service - you will find that some providers will want to do the easy things they can make money on. So they will do all the simple operations but the expensive surgeries, they don’t want to do. So, in education, what you will find is lots of business courses and those that are easy to deliver, but the really difficult things like medicine or engineering, they won’t go into.”

Khan, who recently turned 60, says he “loves working” and has no intention of retiring. But after 40 years of working long days and attending functions most evenings, he has recently joined a gym and now tries to keep at least two evenings free a week. What continues to motivate him about further education is its capacity to transform lives.

“My big drive in life is that there are two factors that affect lives – that’s religion and education.

“In religion you can have a life transforming experience and change your life. In education, you can have a better quality of life, a job, work your way up and do things better for yourself, your family and community.

“There is something very satisfying about that,” he says.

FE Week Expert

The devil is in the detail for new teacher training bursary scheme



The Annual Conference of the Association Colleges is a highlight for many of us in the FE sector. Debate and discussion on the big issues of the day, high profile keynote speakers, showcases of the very best in teaching and learning and, of course, silently judging exhibitors based on the quality of their freebies.

Ministerial speeches always provoke a reaction, and this year the speech by FE Minister John Hayes was true to form, offering us a round-up of progress made and of progress still to be made, in a fashion we've all come to know and expect.

He told us that FE is no longer the neglected middle child of education, that the sector is getting the freedoms it needs and that he wants "to abolish as much uncertainty for FE as I can."

For me, the brilliance of FE lies in its adaptability, its flexibility, its ability to embrace change and respond to the challenge of the new.

"The brilliance of FE lies in its adaptability, its flexibility, its ability to embrace change"

When it comes to teaching and learning it is the unknowns of what the future holds that leads to curriculum innovation and vibrant provision meeting the needs of business and industry.

I suspect it is answers to the big questions that FE wants and this was true this week when

the Institute for Learning questioned the Government's direction on FE Initial Teacher Training.

I see one of our key responsibilities as a professional body as ensuring that future generations of learners benefit from highly qualified and dedicated teaching professionals.

To achieve this we must be able to attract and retain the very best professionals from industry and support them properly to become dual professionals; vocational experts and teaching experts.

This is something IfL is passionate about which is why we raised these issues in such detail through our responses to government consultations and directly with Ministers.

It was reassuring, therefore, that John Hayes announced in his speech at AoC Conference that this would be addressed by government through the introduction of new bursaries for new teachers and trainers undertaking teacher training.

"To ensure that our teachers are the best in the world and have access to HE I can announce today that we will introduce a bursary for initial teacher training" John Hayes MP, AoC Conference, November 15, 2011.

The Minister reinforced his vision in a series of interviews and his post-speech press conference, where he talked about how he wanted the system to be similar to the system for trainee school teachers because the status quo disadvantages FE in a way that "wouldn't be compatible with the priority and status we are affording it." The announcement was also welcomed strongly by Martin Doel, Chief Executive at the AoC.

As always, the devil will of course be in the detail and we will be hoping for equal support for those following the non-academic route in to teacher training – those from engineering, construction, hospitality, care, etc, who have taken vocational pathways – as well as graduates taking an academic route.

John Hayes has set out the challenge and IfL looks forward to working with the sector and the Department to ensure the new ITT bursaries featuring strongly in government's new skills strategy 'new challenges new chances' due to be published shortly.

After six-and-a-half years at IfL, Lee Davies will be leaving in February 2012 to take on his new post as chief executive of the Chartered Institute of Patent Attorneys. He began his 23-year career in further education as a part-time plumbing lecturer at Highbury College Portsmouth, and will continue to be an IfL Fellow.

Lee Davies is the Deputy Chief Executive for the Institute for Learning

It's about time we rescued apprenticeships from politics



for part time and locally based degree level work, probably offered through FE colleges.

What then should be done to rescue apprenticeships from the hugely inflated expectations that are currently attached to them? Part of the answer might be to recognise that the public understands apprenticeships as a good way of progressing young people into skilled employment, and for policy to go with the grain of that understanding.

That means stepping back from a bureaucratic attempt to create an apprenticeship route into all occupations; and also rethinking whether it makes sense to put a developmental programme for young people in a Department and Agency that both major in adult skills. There is a strong case for policy on the initial training of young people to be led by the Department of Education.

The second part of the solution is to take seriously the arguments advanced by bodies such as AELP and the IoD that apprenticeships should essentially be an employer driven programme. That means that government agencies should back off and leave it to employers to determine how many apprentices to employ and within broad limits what they should study. This does not mean handing public money to employers to spend – all that would do is perpetuate the game whereby training providers chase public investment and in some cases collude with employers to get their hands on it without adding any significant value.

Government should be very clear and quite restrictive in what it funds: basic skills for 16-19 apprentices for certain – its not for employers to meet the cost of the general education we prescribe for those under the compulsory participation age.

A good case can be made for government funding for the general education component of apprenticeships for those aged 19-24. Beyond that funding should be a matter for employers. There is an interesting debate to be had as to whether some support for employers might be delivered through loans – the need to repay would ensure that money was only spent on things that add value – but in the main employer led should mean employer funded.

The final step is to stop counting. In a system which is truly employer led the numbers of apprentices would find their own level. There would certainly be a fall in numbers and a serious fall in those areas where growth has been inflated by easy access to government money. Apprentices would be taken on where they represented a sensible investment and not where there was no need. This would save money; but more importantly it would require government to address the serious problems identified earlier without the fiction that simply beating the drum for apprenticeships will solve them all.

Mick Fletcher is a Consultant on Further Education

Apprenticeships are far too popular with the general public for their own good. It's so easy for politicians to bask in a warm glow of approval when they announce increased support for apprenticeships that they are currently seen as the answer to far more problems than they can realistically solve. Here are four examples.

- Apprenticeships are not the answer to providing good quality provision for the majority of 16-19 year olds who don't want to do A levels (or in many cases do want to but are not wanted by A level providers). Changes in the youth labour market mean that apprenticeships will only ever be available for a small minority of the cohort: continual demands that they should be better understood by school leavers simply disguises the fact that the real issue is to provide more and better vocational provision, mostly in colleges, and broadly along the lines set out by Alison Wolf.

- Apprenticeships are not the answer to unemployment; it is jobs that are needed for both adults and young people. A job with training is clearly better than a job without but measures to stimulate employment need to be quite different to and more broad ranging than incentives to turn jobs into apprenticeships. Once again promising more apprenticeships disguises the lack of real action to create jobs.

- Apprenticeships are not the answer to up-skilling the adult workforce. As a country we probably need to invest more in training adult employees and there is a potential role for public funding to play; but simply re-badging Train to Gain type interventions as apprenticeships helps no-one, and risks damaging the apprenticeship brand. Issues around who should pay to increase the skills of the existing workforce need to be tackled head on.

- Apprenticeships are not the answer if large numbers of young people feel they can't afford HE. Increased demand from those who would formerly have gone to university will create no more jobs and will displace existing applicants; moreover there is a real shortage of apprenticeships at Level 4 and growth in their number is likely to be slow. Answers to our HE problems should include better student support, better communication of the generous support there already is, and increasing opportunities

FE Week Expert



The problem with badges

We all have them. You go to a college, they give you a Visitor Pass and then you forget to hand it in when you leave. It's on your lapel and then you see folks in the street staring at your chest. Not a problem for me, but the ladies amongst us might find this distressing, or flattering perhaps. I know not. My car is full of them. I reckon I could get into half the colleges in the country.

When I worked in Wandsworth the Chief Executive of the Council was bothered about these badges and, in what he thought was an

inspired moment, decreed that they should be worn "at eye level". Whether this was to be achieved by the careful application of BluTak or SuperGlue was not explained, but it might have been helpful, if painful.

But those badges on neck wotsits are a pain. Just back from the AoC conference I spent my time staring at people's tummies (unobtrusively of course). You know how it is, "I seem to know that person, let me get close in a sidelong and subtle kind of way of course. Glance sideways and look down. I shall try to stare at their midriff without arousing suspicion." I felt like a pervert!

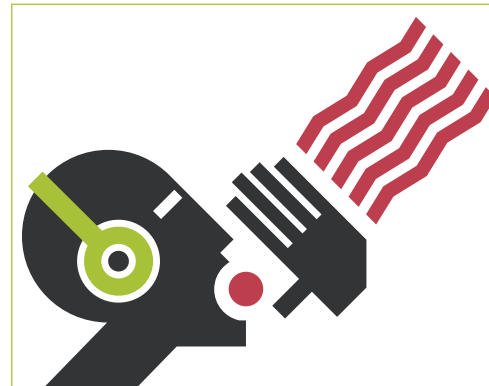
Then they spot this and try to read yours. What is the etiquette for this? Now you are both trying to read tummies in an unobtrusive way. What is worse is that you think that you vaguely know them but they are so much older and seem to have gone grey, and, worse, you have no idea if they are friend or foe. And by the time you have both clocked one another it is too late to escape. "Nick," they say, "didn't we meet at..." wherever and then you realise how you know them and fake a phone call and run off into Starbucks.

The AoC should bring back lapel badges. Or something at eye level. Or maybe bar codes.

Nick Warren is an FE marketing consultant for Policy Consortium

FE Week Agitator

UKCES should also be reviewed



It seems that this is the season to dish-out reviews in FE. In recent weeks it has been announced that both the Institute for Learning, and the Skills Funding Agency will be reviewed, and there will also be at least three different apprenticeship reviews (NAS on duration, Vince's employer-led on standards and then there is the BIS Select Committee enquiry due to be announced shortly).

So while we are in the mood, can I put a request in that the UK Commission for Employment and Skills (UKCES) is also reviewed?

Their £73.3 million grant letter from the Government says (**in bold**) that their "focus will be to secure a much greater commitment from employers to invest in skills".

So how have the UKCES interpreted this instruction from their paymaster? What does the UKCES mean by 'employer ownership'? Well giving £250m of colleges money directly to employers it seems. Without an accountability after thought of course (see page 4).

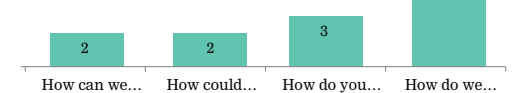
Sorry, has the UKCES, led by their Chair Charlie Mayfield from John Lewis Partnership, all of a sudden become the voice of the CBI?

Surely large employers should be paying the professionals (colleges and training providers) for the delivery of training?

So let's review the UKCES and see if they are on a path to "secure a much greater commitment from employers to invest in skills". Maybe would should ask Chris Banks?

One final thought, perhaps the review could include a section on whether it is time the UKCES moved beyond asking questions.

I tuned into the Apprenticeship conference last week (see page 12) at which their Chief Executive was speaking. In 20 minutes he started 21 sentences with the word 'how'. In true UKCES report writing style, let's see those figures in full:



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"BTEC qualifications enabled us to win new business with large employers, such as the National Health Service (NHS), many of whom understand and trust the brand of BTEC."

Rick Thomas, Operations Director - The Skills People, Lewisham College

Our fully integrated BTEC Apprenticeships offer a number of benefits:

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- Allow a completely holistic delivery with a choice of assessment methods
- Free support materials to enable efficient and successful delivery
- SASE/SASW approved, fit for purpose qualifications developed alongside Sector Skills Councils (SSC)
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To find out more information on BTEC Apprenticeships and how to start delivering them, please visit www.btecapprenticeships.com, call **0844 576 0045** or email btecapprenticeships@pearson.com

FE Week gets technical

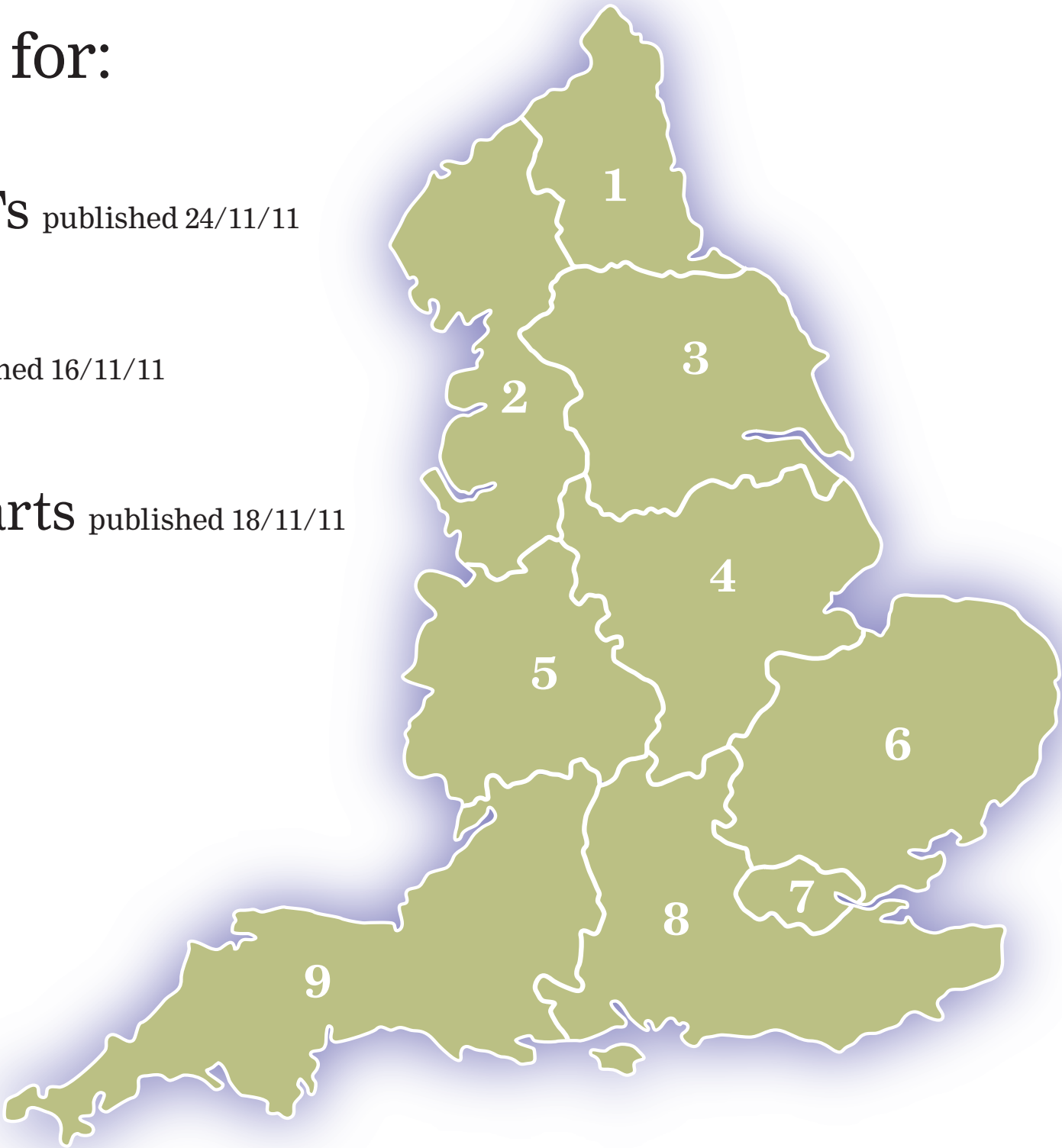
FE Week brings you, on one handy **pull-out**, a summary of regional statistics published this month

Regional figures for:

16-24 year-old NEETs published 24/11/11

Unemployment published 16/11/11

Apprenticeships starts published 18/11/11



Regional 16-24 year old NEETs (Department for Education)

Number and percentage of 16-24 year olds NEET						
Region	Quarter 3 2010		Quarter 3 2011		Shift	
1. North East	68,000	21.2%	70,000	21.2%	2,000	2.9%
2. North West	162,000	18.7%	204,000	23.9%	42,000	25.9%
3. Yorkshire and The Humber	124,000	18.1%	157,000	22.7%	33,000	26.6%
4. East Midlands	86,000	15.7%	81,000	14.9%	-5,000	-5.8%
5. West Midlands	117,000	18.8%	136,000	21.2%	19,000	16.2%
6. East of England	99,000	16.7%	115,000	18.9%	16,000	16.2%
7. London	142,000	16.2%	159,000	17.9%	17,000	12.0%
8. South East	143,000	15.6%	159,000	17.1%	16,000	11.2%
9. South West	84,000	14.6%	82,000	14.0%	-2,000	-2.4%
England	1,026,000	17.1%	1,163,000	19.2%	137,000	13.4%

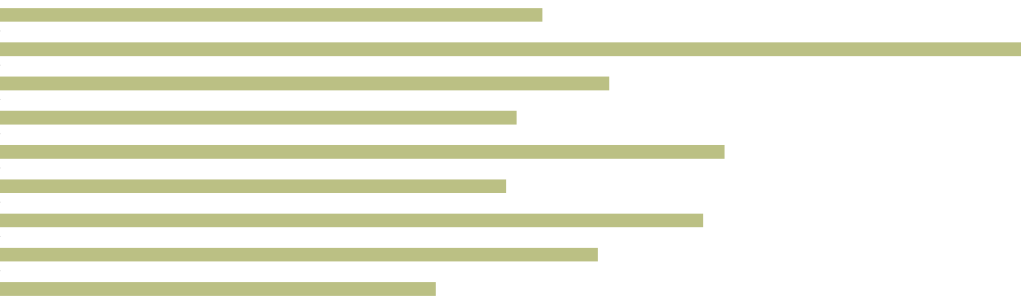
Regional unemployment figures (ONS)

Regional summary of labour market headline indicators	Unemployment estimates for July to September 2011		Unemployment Change on quarter (change since April to June 2011)		Change on year (change since July to September 2010)	
Thousands, seasonally adjusted	Aged 16+	Aged 16-64	Aged 16+	Aged 16-64	Aged 16+	Aged 16-64
Region	Level	Rate (%)	Level	Rate (%)	Level	Rate (%)
1. North East	146,488	12	20,002	2	30,959	3
2. North West	292,909	9	-7,396	0	15,161	0
3. Yorkshire and The Humber	274,395	10	51,115	2	34,678	1
4. East Midlands	186,630	8	-133	0	4,220	0
5. West Midlands	234,362	9	9,939	0	-1,226	0
6. East of England	210,455	7	13,891	0	13,670	0
7. London	409,598	10	4,072	0	35,713	1
8. South East	275,966	6	15,894	0	-1,246	0
9. South West	177,766	7	2,478	0	29,673	1
England	2,208,570	8	109,862	0	161,602	1

Regional apprenticeship starts (Data Service)

Region	Shift in starts between 09/10 and 10/11			
Age	Under 19	19-24	25+	All Ages
1. North East	1,740	2,460	11,290	15,490
2. North West	2,490	5,040	21,640	29,170
3. Yorkshire and The Humber	370	2,310	14,710	17,390
4. East Midlands	690	1,960	12,110	14,760
5. West Midlands	1,690	3,730	15,240	20,670
6. East of England	1,640	2,270	10,550	14,460
7. London	2,420	4,130	13,500	20,060
8. South East	660	1,690	14,710	17,070
9. South West	-80	1,160	11,370	12,450
England Total	11,600	24,700	125,100	161,500
Other	-80	340	1,230	1,490
Grand Total	11,500	25,100	126,400	163,000

Increase in apprenticeship starts (all ages)



Region	All Apprenticeships (09/10)				All Apprenticeships (10/11 provisional)				Percentage shift			
Age	Under 19	19-24	25+	All Ages	Under 19	19-24	25+	All Ages	Under 19	19-24	25+	All Ages
1. North East	9,040	5,930	3,540	18,510	10,780	8,390	14,830	34,000	19%	41%	319%	84%
2. North West	20,840	18,150	8,290	47,280	23,330	23,190	29,930	76,450	12%	28%	261%	62%
3. Yorkshire and The Humber	15,930	14,080	6,520	36,530	16,300	16,390	21,230	53,920	2%	16%	226%	48%
4. East Midlands	10,850	9,990	3,790	24,620	11,540	11,950	15,900	39,380	6%	20%	320%	60%
5. West Midlands	13,590	12,520	5,610	31,720	15,280	16,250	20,850	52,390	12%	30%	272%	65%
6. East of England	10,170	9,960	3,600	23,730	11,810	12,230	14,150	38,190	16%	23%	293%	61%
7. London	7,880	8,570	3,900	20,350	10,300	12,700	17,400	40,410	31%	48%	346%	99%
8. South East	14,530	18,170	6,420	39,120	15,190	19,860	21,130	56,190	5%	9%	229%	44%
9. South West	12,620	15,410	6,990	35,020	12,540	16,570	18,360	47,470	-1%	8%	163%	36%
England Total	115,500	112,800	48,700	276,900	127,100	137,500	173,800	438,400	10%	22%	257%	58%
Other	1,320	1,000	470	2,790	1,240	1,340	1,700	4,280	-6%	34%	262%	53%
Grand Total	116,800	113,800	49,100	279,700	128,300	138,900	175,500	442,700	10%	22%	257%	58%

FE Week campus round-up



Trafford College students support Misha B

Students at Trafford College's Manchester Music Base are rallying in support of fellow student and X Factor contestant Misha B.

Following her shock position on the show in the 'sing off' two weeks ago, classmates at the college have joined together to lend their support for the singer.

Misha, currently a vocal artist student at Trafford College's Manchester Music Base, was saved by the judges in the sing off against Kitty Brucknell for her vocal talent and potential as an artist in the music business.

Misha fought her way to survival with her own unique version of Jessie J's latest hit 'Who You Are.'

Her classmates, who have tirelessly campaigned to support Misha from the beginning of her X Factor journey, are encouraging fans and Trafford residents to vote for their local

contestant to keep her in the competition.

Her friend Naomi Read said: "When I've spoken to Misha, she feels like she's living a dream, she's working so hard and she really wants this.

"She's such a lovely person and always helps other students in college to achieve their best. We're all voting for her in college and so are our friends and families, we just want all want her to win the X Factor."

Fellow classmate and close friend of Misha, Courtney Reid added: "There's a lot of support for her here at the college, and we are doing all we can to encourage people to vote for her.

"We were shocked she was in the bottom two again, as her performance was amazing. We're promoting her on Facebook and Twitter and are holding events this week in the city centre and at college too. Keep voting Misha."

Solihull College student saves life of choking schoolgirl with first aid training



When college student Niala Ahmed left home, she had no idea her lifesaving training would be put into practice on her way into college.

However, the Solihull College student, who was on her way into college to complete the last day of her first aid course, was suddenly forced to put her hard work to good use when called upon to save the life of a schoolgirl.

Niala was travelling into college on the No73 bus in Bordesley Green earlier this month, when she looked out of the window and noticed a girl standing outside, choking and turning blue.

Despite feeling apprehensive and unsure that she would be able to help, Niala saw the girl collapse on the floor and realised she had to assist.

The 18-year-old, from Bordesley Green, said: "I was really nervous and worried that I would do something wrong, but when I saw the girl turning bright blue and unable to breathe I just tried to remember everything I had learned at college.

"I tilted her head back and removed a gobstopper from her mouth, but she was still not breathing. I then gave her CPR for about three minutes until the ambulance arrived."

When the ambulance staff arrived they thanked Niala and said how she had helped save the girl's life.

Niala adds: "I didn't manage to find out the girl's name or what school she is at, as I was more worried about getting back on the bus and arriving at college on time. But I hope she is fully recovered now and feeling better."

Niala is studying the BTEC National Award in Air Cabin Crew and Aviation Operations, which the three-day first aid course is a compulsory part of.

Her course tutor, Ian Boulton, added: "I can't tell you enough how proud I am of Niala.

"She is an outstanding student who acted calmly and confidently in a very difficult situation. She is a real credit to the college."

City College Norwich staff get on their bikes to raise money for children in need



Students helped raise more than £1,800 for a worthy cause with a host of sponsored fun.

City College Norwich's fundraising efforts were joined by former Norwich City footballers Darren Huckerby and Darren Eadie to raise money for BBC Children in Need.

Eastern MEP Richard Howitt was also on hand at the college.

The total amount raised is expected to exceed £2,000, with the proceeds from a number of the college's fundraising events still to be counted.

It has been a fun-filled week right across the college, with a wide range of Pudsey-inspired events being organised to raise money.

Events included Hotel School students Robert Ducker and Sam Masters' Evening of Childishness in the Debut Restaurant, students and staff taking part in a sponsored static bike ride from Lands End to John O'Groats and a Students' Union-organised Mad Hatter's tea party.

Lots of students and staff also dressed up in fancy dress on Friday, including their Sixth Form Centre students who wore pyjamas on 'dress down' Friday and Applications Administrator Diane Horrex working in full snorkelling gear, complete with flippers, for the day.



Blackpool and The Fylde College students raise charity dough

It was a sea of spots as a college showed its support for Pudsey.

Students from Blackpool and The Fylde College wore pyjamas, fancy dress and baked spotty iced buns and curled hair for Children in Need.

Some brave souls even had their legs waxed while tutors became students for the day in school uniform and some dressed up as Where's Wally.

Altogether it showed they would do anything to raise money for the cause.

Although the money is still being counted, the college raised £1,800 last year and hopes to top that total this time around.

Dearne Valley College students show their spots for Pudsey Bear



Childcare students from Dearne Valley College (DVC) asked college staff and fellow students to dig deep for this year's BBC Children in Need Appeal.

With collection buckets rattling at the Wath based college, students in fancy dress raised a grand total of £372.00 for Pudsey Bear and the BBC's Children in Need Appeal.

The youngsters studying the Diploma in Childcare and Education course level 3, years one and two raised the cash by selling raffle tickets and offering a variety of fun games. Katie Cobb, DVC Childcare Tutor commented: "This event was suggested by the students initially. I am very proud of their effort which was supported by staff and students and has raised a lot of money."

Bicton College students get pat on the back for smelly Children in Need fundraiser



Bicton College students created an innovative Children in Need fundraiser involving a cow last Friday.

The Sport and Outdoor Adventure students placed a cow in a pen on the lawn in front of Bicton House and then sold numbered pieces of wood to staff and students to place around the pen in the hope of marking the spot where Denis the cow would place her donation!

Outdoor Adventure tutor Ingrid Reynolds said: "Unfortunately the pressure to perform got to Denis who failed to deliver in the allotted time so we had to give a time limit and then pick the log nearest to where Denis was standing."

Winning contestant was Equine lecturer Nicky Craven. Bicton College students raised £100 towards the Children in Need appeal.

Floristry shop opened at Doncaster College

There was a festival of colour as a college opened its new floristry shop.

Doncaster College opened the shop last week with Gill Parkes, head of the academy of commercial enterprise, leading the celebrations.

Floristry students got the chance to showcase their skills by demonstrating a number of floristry practices, such as Christmas wreath making, buttonhole making and bottle wrapping with guests able to have a go.

Catering students, meanwhile, were on hand from the hospitality and catering department at the college, served champagne and canapés



throughout the event, and guests had the opportunity to buy items from the shop.

Guests were also entered into a raffle, with the lucky winners announced by Kerry Marr, the college's assistant director for land based studies, at the end.

Granny at Burton and South Derbyshire College receives student of the year accolade



A grandmother who once struggled with her reading and writing has received a Student of the Year accolade.

Sarran Lovell (46), from Uttoxeter, received her award from record-breaking freestyle swimmer Mark Foster at a day of celebrations to mark the achievements of students at an awards ceremony by Burton and South Derbyshire College.

The celebration honoured those who have overcome adversity, achieved excellence in their field or given an outstanding contribution to their course or community.

Sarran had been unable to work for some time due to health problems when she decided to enrol on a course at the college.

Low in confidence, she had been diagnosed with dyslexia earlier in life and struggled with her reading and writing.

However as her young granddaughter edged closer to school-age, Sarann became determined to learn to read and write.

Melanie Arrowsmith-Kemp, the head of foundation learning and skills for work at the college, said: "Sarran has developed her confidence and has become a supportive, popular and positive role model to fellow students on her course."

Sarran added: "My confidence has improved so much that I'm now volunteering as a student rep and a mentor to students with learning difficulties."



Cornwall College SU President becomes youngest ever Councillor for Cornwall

A students' union president has become the youngest councillor in Cornwall.

Cornwall College Students' Union President Joe Vinson has been elected to his local parish council.

Joe, who turned 18 in July, decided to stand for St Agnes Parish Council after nine councillors resigned and he felt faith had been lost by residents in the area.

Joe said: "I decided enough was enough and that my village of St Agnes deserved passionate and dedicated people to represent it."

"I decided to stand in the hope that I could

represent the younger generation in the village and to rebuild the trust between residents and the council.

"My election is a prime example of why no one can accuse young people of being disinterested in the community that surrounds them."

Joe already has a wealth of experience on the political stage which includes a stint as a Youth Parliament MP, Students' Union secretary and now president, and elections to the NUS' zone committee and financial support commission.



Award winning rapper opens new music suite at Kensington and Chelsea College

An award winning rapper raised the roof while unveiling a college's new music suite.

Akala, a MOBO award winner, urged students to "make the most of the new college resources and grab the opportunities it brings" as he officially opened the new facility at Kensington and Chelsea College.

Thanks to a dramatic make-over, the suite will give budding musicians access to spacious recording studios kitted out with industry standard equipment.

Akala thrilled the 100-strong audience as he mingled with them, met music students and spoke about the value of education.

He said: "What the college is providing is an opportunity to nurture talent. Education is everything, and the only thing people can't take away from you."

"It's important to put the work in and create

music that inspires. Music is a universal language, and through it you have the power to educate and change attitudes."

The star, who has supported artists including Christina Aguilera and Richard Ashcroft, in addition to touring with Nas and Damian Marley, encouraged students to "learn to play music before intellectualising it", adding "the theory side of music is good, but one of my biggest regrets is not having learnt to play an instrument when I was younger."

Guests at the event were also treated to a musical performance from students before enjoying a tour of the new music suite.

Paul Hall, head of music at the college, said: "We have a thriving music department which is committed to giving students the best possible start to their career, whether that's by investing in new equipment or using our in-house contacts to connect them to the industry."

FE Week events...

NAS asks for help to stamp out substandard apprenticeships

Nick Summers

@summersnicholas

The Chief Executive of the National Apprenticeship Service (NAS) has called for the sector to work together in order to stamp out poor quality apprenticeships.

Simon Waugh (right), speaking at the fourth national 'Future of Apprenticeships' conference last week, said if everyone was "on the case" it would be possible to get substandard training down to three per cent of total programmes.

"If we're all on the case, then what we can do is, if we've got five, six, or seven per cent of the programme which we collectively would agree is substandard.. I'll tell you what, between us we could get it down to four per cent, and then we'll get it down to three per cent, Mr Waugh said.

He added: "Will it ever be perfect? I don't think so. I honestly don't think that with 450,000, or 500,00 starts, every single one will be perfect. But I tell you what. We'll get as close to perfection as we possibly can."

Mr Waugh said the NAS would review every training provider deemed to be delivering short apprenticeships.

"We are going to look at every single one of the frameworks, and every one of the programmes which are being delivered materially in less time, with the question 'why are you doing it in significantly less time?' and 'why are we paying you for it?'"

Mr Waugh added: "If only 10 per cent of the money in the last year went to 25 plus, you can see we're already paying a very, very, very heavily discounted rate for 25 plus.

"But it doesn't matter. We don't want to pay £1 to anybody to say you've delivered an apprenticeship if it's one that actually is not one that is really an apprenticeship, and there isn't embedded learning in that, and also the period of time to prove the skills have been embedded.

"So we have a whole programme now around looking at quality, and the minister has said very clearly in the last few weeks that the absolute priority for us as an agency is quality, quality quality."

Mr Waugh said concerns about the rise in apprentices aged 25 plus was a "British disease" damaging a great success story.

"I hear all the time, 'isn't it such a shame that all apprenticeships and all the growth are around adults, what about young people?'"

"In the last two years, with all the growth we've achieved across the programme as a whole, 29 per cent of that growth has been 16 to 18 year-olds in an incredibly tough employment market for young people.

"Last year, 89 per cent of all apprenticeship programme funds went to 16 to 24 year-olds, and I think that's a really stunning number.

"It's a very British disease in my view, taking something which is potentially a great success story and looking at the five, ten per cent on the margins."

The conference, held at the International Coffee Organisation (ICO) in London, was attended by more than 150 delegates from further education colleges and training providers.

The morning session played host to some of the heavyweights of the apprenticeship community, including Dr Susan Pember, Director of Further Education and Skills Investment at the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS).

"I must say from the onset that I'm still in awe of what Simon has managed to achieve over the last 18 months, because you're right, in 2003/04 we didn't get the word apprenticeship talked about that much, but with Simon's work and leadership over the last few years, nearly every leading company, if they're not offering apprenticeships, know they should. And that is an amazing achievement," she said.

Although the title of conference referenced the future of apprenticeships, the civil servant

was also keen to remind delegates of the past.

"Over the last year the government has worked with the UK commission to find ways in which to engage employers more," Pember said.

"The concept of guilds has come forward and the Growth and Innovation Fund has had several bids and projects accepted to actually establish skills."

She added: "The reason that John Hayes particularly is advocating that is about ensuring that vocational education and training is seen as prestigious."

Dr Susan Pember also wanted to reiterate the importance of apprenticeships and how they would enable Britain to compete in the global marketplace.

"It's not something you do for one or two years in your youth, you carry it through as a profession, and that's really important," Pember said.

"It's important that apprentices turn into master craftspeople, who then turn into teachers and trainers themselves, either in the workplace or back with the provider, and they carry on the professional updating.

"That cycle of professional updating is the only thing which will make us an incredible nation that can compete with other nations."

The speech was followed by Michael Davis, Chief Executive for the UK Commission for Employment and Skills (UKCES), who discussed what should be done to improve apprenticeships over the next 10 years.

Mr Davis said he wanted employers to take on a "collective responsibility" that included investing more in the labour pool and accepting more accountability.

"Public expenditure will only go in one direction over the next 10 years.

"The government has done an awful lot, but at some point in the future maybe the government does less, because employers themselves really own the agenda and want to take it forward," Mr Davis said.

"That in turn creates a real sense of action."



Proposals from the UKCES included funding employers directly for apprenticeships, for example through the tax system or incentivised work, and extending the scope and needs of competitive investment funds.

Following a quick refreshment break there were a number of sessions analysing the delivery of vocational training, including how access to apprenticeships could be improved for young people and the best way to incentivise small and medium sized employers.

This then led into an afternoon seminar featuring, among others, Nick Linford, Managing Director of Lsect and Managing Editor of *FE Week*, and Peter Cobrin, Director of Not Going to Uni.

The conference concluded at 4:30pm after a series of additional case studies, as well as a question and answer session from a selection of the speakers.



Policy Review TV's interactive online broadcast

A video feed of the conference was broadcast live by Policy Review TV.

Anyone who was unable to attend the event could watch all of the speeches, as well as their presentation slides, by paying a reduced fee on the Policy Review TV website.

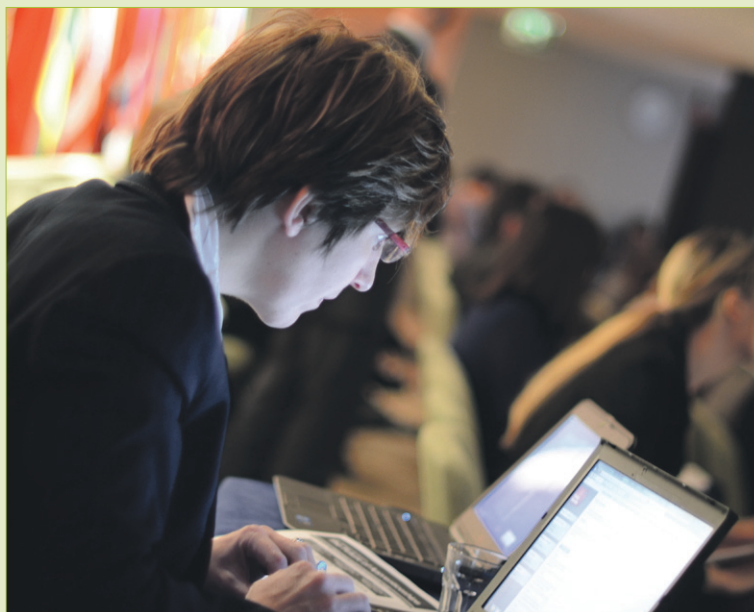
The service allowed users to ask questions and participate in an online comments section, and also follow the official Twitter hashtag for the event, #vocation11.

Paul Rushworth, Marketing Manager for Policy Review TV, said: "Rather than just sitting and watching they can actually interact, so any questions that come up will come to someone like myself or the team inside filming, and they'll then be passed through to the Chair."

FE Week was given a demonstration during the morning sessions and discovered that more than 100 people were using the service.

Mr Rushworth said: "Because the price point is considerably lower, people who are perhaps in more junior positions but could still use the information are able to access and participate."

Presentations could still be accessed once the event was finished using an on-demand service provided by Policy Review TV.



Policy Review TV sending questions from viewers to the Chair



Pictures by Nick Linford



Susan Pember, Director of FE and Skills Investment at BIS speaking to delegates



The event was held at the conference centre at the International Coffee Organization (ICO)



A delegate at the 'Future of Apprenticeships' conference spotting her tweet on the big screen



Michael Davis, CEO for the UK Commission for Employment and Skills (UKCES)



Re-shaping Nottingham through excellence,
employment and enterprise.

**Deputy Principal Delivery & Deputy
Principal Resources**
c. £100k per annum

**Assistant Principals (3) -
Enterprise, Quality & Corporate**
c. £69 - £75k per annum

Director of Curriculum Innovation
c. £61 to £67k per annum



We are in a period of exciting and progressive change and are looking to recruit an Executive team with the Vision, Talent and Passion to deliver a re-newed College Nottingham. We believe that ncn has the capacity to make a major contribution to transforming the future prospects of our City, County and Region and we seek to position ourselves at the heart of partnership strategies to deliver economic growth business formation and employment outcomes.

We are ambitious. We believe we can and must do more to impact positively on the lives and prosperity of local people. We will look to raise their aspirations and instil them with a new spirit of enterprise. We will also seek to enhance our support to local businesses and key employment and wealth creating sectors, providing the future skills they need to become more competitive.

Our **Deputy Principal Delivery** will lead and inspire a modern, employer responsive curriculum with a proven track record of sustained delivery of change and continuous improvement in a broad FE and HE setting. Excellent teaching and learning will be at the heart of all our delivery with employment and enterprise embedded throughout.

Our **Deputy Principal Resources** will provide leadership and drive to all our professional support services to deliver excellence - efficiently and effectively. The delivery of outstanding financial management and the ability to develop our Income Diversity are crucial to our investment strategy. Alongside this, the role will deliver innovative accommodation, ict and workforce development strategies to enable ncn to deliver its ambitions for extending employability and enterprise to our learners.

Our **Assistant Principal Enterprise** will co-ordinate our training and services offer for employers, and our transformation to an Entrepreneurial College. Through collaboration across all curriculum areas, the role will lead on Sales, Employer Training (inc Apprenticeships), Enterprise and International and will coordinate partnership delivery and employer forums at college and cluster level.

Our **Assistant Principal Quality** will drive quality improvement, promote equality and inclusion and ensure all our students and customers receive excellence in all our services. This role will have operational responsibility for all quality processes and will promote a culture of continuous improvement throughout and beyond the learner/customer journey.

Our **Assistant Principal Corporate** will lead our corporate research and intelligence (inc new opportunities and bidding), marketing and communications (inc thought leadership and success strategy) and community development including school partnerships. This role will support the Principal in the planning cycle leading to the College Strategic Plan.

Our **Director for Curriculum Innovation** will lead on cross-college curriculum strategies for enhancing our Teaching & Learning including E-learning, Learning Resources and excellent Tutorial and Enrichment Skills. Through collaboration with all curriculum areas, this crucial role will support the Deputy Principal Delivery in the review and refresh of our curriculum delivery to ensure an excellent, modern, employer responsive delivery with enterprise embedded throughout.

In all cases, the ability to lead, inspire, motivate and develop staff will be crucial to our ambitions. As will be the commitment and ability to collaborate effectively with internal and external partners.

Please call Amarjit Basi, Principal and Chief Executive on 0115 9121994 for an informal discussion in the first instance regarding these exciting opportunities.

The selection assessment dates for the posts are:

Deputy Principal posts – 19 & 20 December
Assistant Principal posts – early in the New Year
Director of Curriculum Innovation – early in the New Year

The closing date for these posts is midday on Friday 9th December.



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Leeds City College

Your opportunity to play a key role in the senior leadership team of one of the largest and most exciting colleges.

Leeds City College is a highly successful business with over 2,000 employees, 50,000 students, and an annual turnover of over £90m. Delivery is via a number of major campuses across both Leeds and Keighley. The College has ambitious plans for realising future growth and outstanding quality.

We are currently seeking to recruit an outstanding individual with a proven track record in devising and implementing Quality Assurance systems, procedures and processes that deliver improvements in both student success rates and business service standards.

The College has aspirations to be exceptional and we need an experienced individual who will be relentless in the pursuit of excellence.

For further details and to apply please visit the College's website at www.leedscitycollege.ac.uk/jobs or contact the HR Department :

t: 0113 308 7900

e: hr.operations@leedscitycollege.ac.uk

(applications by CV alone will not be accepted)

Closing date for applications is Friday 2 December 2011
Interviews will take place 5th and 6th January 2012.

Leeds City College is committed to safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. All successful applicants are, therefore, required to complete an enhanced criminal records disclosure.

All applicants will be treated fairly irrespective of race, disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief or age. The College actively welcomes applications from all sectors of the community.



Leadership Services Associates

The Skills Network is looking for high quality associates and qualified sector specialists to join our new Q.L.A Team.

We are seeking outstanding individuals with a proven track record in the FE sector with high levels of expertise in one of the following:

- Curriculum
- Quality
- Finance
- Management Information Systems
- Teaching and learning
- Inspection
- Funding
- Human Resources

Associates must be able to provide expert strategic guidance and operational support along with quality improvement solutions and delivery for our partner colleges.

To apply please send your CV for the attention of Jev Bhalla at The Skills Network, Abbey Court, 16 Benedict Drive, Selby, YO8 8RY or email Jev.Bhalla@theskillsnetwork.co.uk Alternatively call us on 01757 210522.

QLA is a division of The Skills Network

Apply online at www.ncn.ac.uk or call 0115 911 3662 for an information pack

MIS Manager

£35,000 - £40,000

(commensurate with experience)



The Role

To develop, manage and maintain college management information systems and to ensure their effective use at all BIMM Group sites and to provide accurate reports to Senior Management Teams and BIMMs Board of Directors.

Essential Knowledge and Skills

1. Experience of working with MIS (Unit-e) or equivalent MIS systems for a minimum of 3 years
2. High level of IT skills appropriate to this post, especially the use of Access and/or SQL databases
3. Experience of working with national and local data online
4. Well developed written and oral communication skills
5. Good time management and organisational skills
6. Successful experience of managing staff and working collaboratively
7. Ability to project manage and deliver on time to budget

Application Closing Date: **2nd December 2011**

Interview Date: **Week commencing 12th December 2011**

Start Date: **January 2012**

**Send covering letter
outlining suitability for the
role PLUS CV to:
lorainepearson@bimm.co.uk**

IT Manager

An exciting opportunity
has arisen at The London
College of Beauty Therapy
for an IT Manager.



In this important role, you will ensure the streamlined operation of the IT Department in alignment with the business objectives of LCBT. With full budgetary control, line-management responsibilities and management of the IT infrastructure of the college, this individual will oversee all the IT-related activities and operations of the college, as well as provide administrative direction and support for daily operational activities of the IT department. The IT Manager will work closely with decision makers in other departments to identify, recommend, develop, implement, and support cost-effective technology solutions for all aspects of the organization. This person will also define and implement IT policies, procedures, and best practices.

To apply to this role, please email your CV and cover letter (stating how you heard about this vacancy) to:
recruit@lcbt.co.uk

The closing date for applications is 2nd December 2011.

**For more info go to:
<http://www.feweek.co.uk/index.php/jobs/>**

Functional Skills Tutor

£18,354 - £35,178 • Full-time • Campus: Tamworth

As part of the Skills for Working Life department, you will join the department teaching Maths and/or English. You will be expected to plan and deliver outstanding learning experiences in functional skills that promote achievement at levels E1 – Level 2, to a range of full-time vocational learners. It is essential you have experience in delivering functional/key skills to 14-19 year olds.

**For an application pack, visit www.southstaffs.ac.uk/about-us/vacancies
Alternatively, email your details quoting job ref HR1112/24
to recruitment@southstaffs.ac.uk**

Please note all correspondence regarding applications and interviews will be via email unless otherwise requested.

**Closing date: Noon on Thursday, 8th December 2011.
Interview date: Thursday, 15th December 2011.**

South Staffordshire College is an equal opportunities employer and welcomes applicants from all sections of the community.

We are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young adults and expect all staff to share this commitment.

This post is subject to an Enhanced Disclosure check under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, medical clearance and satisfactory references.

South Staffordshire College
Lichfield • Cannock • Tamworth • Roodbaston



www.southstaffs.ac.uk

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Additional Learning Support Administrator

£15,656 - £16,369 p.a.

To apply, please complete the College application form with a supporting statement and email to vacancies@bmetc.ac.uk and for more information, please go to www.bmetc.ac.uk/about-us/vacancies

Closing date: **Thursday 8th December 2011**

Birmingham Metropolitan College is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. An enhanced CRB check is required for all successful applicants.

An equal opportunity employer

For more job listings go to:

www.feweek.co.uk



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SUFFOLK
COLLEGE

Head of School, Employer Responsiveness - Engineering and the Built Environment Up to £41,718 pa Full Time

You will lead and manage our work with employers across the Eastern region. With the support of a team of work based learning co-ordinators you will oversee the development of our training and assessment for apprentices and other work place learners in areas such as engineering, manufacturing, construction and new developments within electrical power and building services areas.

You will have extensive professional experience and knowledge gained from within the Engineering and/or the Built Environment sectors as well as knowledge of the vocational qualification structure and apprenticeships. You will possess technology based qualifications at degree level together with Training and Assessment of Workplace Learning. Strong organisation and leadership skills will also be essential.

Interviews: 22 December 2011.

Head of School, Construction Craft Up to £41,718 pa Full Time

You will be managing and developing all aspects of the outstanding Construction Craft School in an exciting environment with excellent facilities. This is an opportunity for an ambitious individual with industry and educational experience, committed to enhancing the student experience. You will have a teaching commitment in one of the School's curriculum areas and will work closely with the faculty management team to maintain outstanding provision and further develop employer links, work-based learning and HE opportunities.

You will have professional experience, relevant qualifications at a high level and an understanding of curriculum management. Strong organisation and management skills will also be essential.

Interviews: 12 December 2011.

Both posts are eligible for a final salary pension scheme.

Closing date: 1 December 2011.

www.westsuffolk.ac.uk

Full information about the posts
and all other College vacancies
is available on our website
www.westsuffolk.ac.uk
alternatively contact the HR Dept,
(indicating the vacancy title) on
(01284) 716339.





WEEKEND

ON
13-14
JULY
2012
AT
MORLEY
COLLEGE

FE Weekend is set to be the biggest event of the FE year. The event will take place over a Friday and a Saturday in central London with speakers, workshops and entertainment.

To express an interest in attending, exhibiting and/or speaking at the event go to: www.surveymonkey.com/s/feweekend



FE Week Sudoku challenge

		7		5	8		2
	4		3				9
8						5	
5		1			6		3
		4				1	
9	2		1			5	7
	5						3
	9				7		1
2		6	4		3		

Difficulty:
MEDIUM

How to play: Fill in all blank squares making sure that each row, column and 3 by 3 box contains the numbers 1 to 9

Solutions: Next week

1		6		9			
	2	9			6		8
		3		2	4		
9	6			7			8
			6	3		5	
5			7			1	3
				5		9	6

Difficulty:
EXPERT

Last Week's solutions

9	3	5	8	1	6	7	4	2
2	4	6	3	5	7	1	8	9
8	7	1	9	2	4	5	3	6
7	1	2	6	9	8	4	5	3
4	5	8	1	3	2	6	9	7
3	6	9	7	4	5	2	1	8
6	9	7	5	8	1	3	2	4
5	2	3	4	7	9	8	6	1
1	8	4	2	6	3	9	7	5

Difficulty:
MEDIUM

6	1	2	7	3	4	9	8	5
9	7	8	2	5	6	1	3	4
5	3	4	8	9	1	6	2	7
7	9	1	4	2	5	8	6	3
4	5	3	6	1	8	7	9	2
2	8	6	9	7	3	4	5	1
8	6	5	1	4	2	3	7	9
3	4	7	5	8	9	2	1	6
1	2	9	3	6	7	5	4	8

Difficulty:
EXPERT

FE Week mini-mascot

Follow the adventures of *FE Week's* biggest and smallest fan!



"Mostly this week I have been trying to keep warm and drinking mojitos"

You can also follow our *FE Week* mini-mascot on Twitter @daniellinford